

Message Text

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53

ACTION XMB-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 L-02

AID-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 /037 W

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R 291340Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 679

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0166

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EMIN, EFIN

SUBJECT: SIERRA RUTILE: EXIM REQUEST FOR GOSL ASSURANCE

PASS EXIM

REF: FREETOWN 2515

1. EMBASSY CONTINUING EFFORTS SPUR GOSL TO COME TO GRIPS WITH ISSUE OF ASSURANCE REQUESTED BY EXIM BUT WE FIND ISSUE NOW GETTING CLOUDY. MRS. DIXON-FYLE, WHO RECENTLY RESUMED WORK, ADMITTED SHE HAD NOT LOOKED AT EXIM FILE SINCE DECEMBER AND THAT SHE HAZY ON DETAILS. SHE AGREED TO SUGGESTIONS THAT EMBOFF REVIEW SITUATION WITH HER SOONEST.

2. CHARGE HAS TWICE IN RECENT WEEKS PRESSED MINING MINISTER KAWUSU-KONTEH FOR RESPONSE TO EXIM REQUEST. IN CONVERSATION JANUARY 27 MINISTER REVEALED CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION ON ISSUE, STATING AT FIRST THAT GOSL THOUGHT EXIM OUT OF LINE IN ASKING GOSL NOT PARTICIPATE IN OWNERSHIP SIERRA RUTILE AND HAD ALREADY SO NOTIFIED EXIM. CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT MINISTER APPARENTLY REFERRING TO PARALLEL NEGOTIATIONS WITH BETHSTEEL ON PARTICIPATION ISSUE WHICH SOLELY BETWEEN GOSL AND BETHSTEEL AND ON WHICH EXIM HAD NO POSITION, THAT EXIM MERELY SEEKING ASSURANCE GOSL WOULD TAKE NO STEPS TO INTERRUPT FLOW OF RUTILE AFTER PRODUCTION BEGUN AND THAT TO BEST OF EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE NO REPLY TO EXIM REQUEST YET MADE. MININISTER THEN SAID GOSL HAD NO INTENTION STOPPING FLOW OF RTUILE BUT EXIM REQUEST
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APPEARED TO GOSL TO BE EVIDENCE OF DOUBT BY EXIM IN GOOD FAITH OF GOSL AND THAT GOSL THOUGHT EXIM SHOULD HAVE FAITH.

3. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS A FIRM GOSL POSITION OR AN OFF-THE-CUFF REACTION FROM MINISTER. EMBASSY SUSPECTS LATTER, SINCE MINISTER CONFUSED ON DETAILS AND CLEARLY HAD NOT FOCUSED ON PROBLEM. MINISTER HAS BEEN HEAVILY PREOCCUPIED IN RECENT WEEKS WITH LOCAL POLITICAL SQUABBLE IN HIS HOME DISTRICT OF KOINADUGU AND HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS TIMER THERE. NONETHELESS, MINISTER'S REACTION NOT ENCOURAGING.

4. EMBASSY PLANS FOLLOW UP WITH MRS. DIXON-FYLE TO ATTEMPT KEEP GOSL CLEARLY FOCUSED ON LIMITED NATURE OF EXIM REQUEST. SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BANK LOANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975FREETO00166
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750033-0203
From: FREETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750111/aaaaajot.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION XMB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 FREETOWN 2515
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 DEC 2003 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIERRA RUTILE: EXIM REQUEST FOR GOSL ASSURANCE PASS EXIM
TAGS: EMIN, EFIN, SF, XMB, SIERRA RUTILE LTD
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006